



GREAT PLAINS

TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

MARCH 2022 NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight



MJE Livestock Equipment
Montezuma, Kansas

Our member spotlight this month is MJE Livestock Equipment (MJE LE) of Montezuma, Kansas. The company designs and develops livestock equipment, and is a full-scale manufacturing division of its parent company, MJE, LLC, a leading contractor in dairy and feedyard construction.

With over 45 years of experience, MJE, LLC is a leading company in the agricultural industry. The company started out with excavating work, and then transitioned to dairy and feedyard facility development. As the company continued to install livestock equipment at many feedyards, they utilized their expertise and expanded a manufacturing division in 2018 where they create custom livestock fence panels, materials, handling equipment and more. Although MJE LE is young, it has proven to be successful. Their newest wheel corral, **The Conquistador**, is the only one of its kind and comes with road-ready features. Another successful product, the **Calf Hutch Latch**, was named one of the Top 10 Products of the Year at the 2020 World Ag Expo in California.



The company strives to make their facility a positive work environment for all employees. To accomplish this, MJE LE put new incentives in place such as: \$500 sign-on bonus, additional \$25/day per diem if employees live more than 15 miles from the facility, and a "Refer a Friend" bonus if employees refer someone who applies and is hired. Since starting these incentives, the company has seen a positive increase in their employment. "These incentives have really helped with workforce issues in both our manufacturing and construction crews. "We highly recommend doing some kind of incentive to solve workforce challenges." – Megan Elsey, Public Relations. The company also sends quarterly newsletters for their employees to inform them of company updates, events and incentive programs.

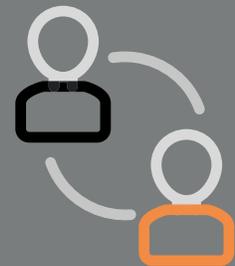


In addition, MJE LE stays connected with the community and surrounding resources by being active in the Montezuma Chamber of Commerce, working with local businesses to make parts, and by participating in a recent manufacturing roundtable with the Great Plains TMC. These connections have allowed them to become familiar with the community, learn from other manufacturers, and to share new ideas.

MJE LE strives to make the jobs of farmers and ranchers easier and to keep livestock happy and healthy through their innovative, American-Made equipment. The company plans to expand their product line to include more Equine livestock equipment and will continue to build upon their **Dealership Network**. Learn more about the company at www.mjelivestockequipment.com.

Did You Know...

...that 10,000 US workers hit retirement age everyday? - Thomasnet.com. With this significant amount of people transitioning out of the workforce, businesses need to take action to determine their exit planning strategy and how they plan to bring younger generations into these positions. Workplace learning and training is critical to ensure that there are employees with the skills and confidence needed to run a business.



Does your business have a plan for retiring employees? The Great Plains TMC has partnered with resources throughout the region that can assist with taking the next steps in preparing for this situation. Reach out to us at info@greatplainsTMC.org to connect with exit planning resources.



Technical Presentation for WKREDA Members



The K-State Technology Development Institute (TDI) did an overview presentation to the WKREDA membership at the March quarterly meeting in Lincoln, KS.

The purpose of this presentation was to inform WKREDA members of the technical services that TDI can provide for entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and launch new products and technologies. The TDI staff also talked about how WKREDA members can work with entrepreneurs with technical projects by guiding them through market research, determining if they need a patent, and when to reach out to TDI's engineering team to begin the design and prototyping process.

TDI will continue to be a technical resource partner for WKREDA members and engage in the committees for the group.

New Kansas SBDC Advisor in Manhattan

Welcome Nadia Arbelo to the Great Plains TMC network! She is a new Business Advisor for the Kansas SBDC and serves the Manhattan District. Prior to her position, she worked in a similar role with the Western North Carolina SBTDC. Her background includes both educational and entrepreneurial experiences, as she worked with schools in Abu Dhabi, UAE, developed an English Language school program in Hungary, and owned several small businesses focused in art, design, and culture. Learn more about her experience and goals below.



As a business owner, what is something you wish entrepreneurs knew before starting a business? - I wish business owners would really take the time to learn about how they will finance their business. The financial needs are truly one of the greatest things a business owner should be on top of. They need to know what their cash flow, product sales, and operating pricing goals are to start.

What has been your biggest success in your roles with the SBTDC/SBDC? - My biggest success was working with a client from the very beginning with no business plan and getting them financially approved for an extremely large amount within a month for a business they wanted to purchase. I was truly impressed with the client and their efforts and the close relationship we formed.

What goals do you have for yourself to assist small businesses this year? - My top two goals for this year are to get certified as a Certified Exit Planning Advisor and then a Certified Global Business Professional. These certifications will allow me to further assist the small businesses in my region.

If you are in the Manhattan area and interested in working with Nadia, become a client at <https://www.kansassbdc.net/become-a-client>

NextGen Under 30 Kansas

Do you have an employee under the age of 30 that works hard and makes a positive impact on your business? Nominate an employee for the NextGen Under 30 Kansas Program! This program identifies and honors the next generation of young adults, and encourages them to follow their career goals in Kansas.



The nominations are open and will continue to be open until August 19th, 2022. The candidate you nominate must be 30 or younger anytime in 2022. The nomination will be anonymous, unless you personally share the nomination with the candidate. There are 27 industries that you can nominate the candidate in, such as manufacturing, agriculture and food production, biotech, distribution and logistics, engineering and more.

The winning candidates will be announced September 12, 2022, with a following "Day at the Capitol" October 3rd, 2022, and a NextGen Dinner and Ceremony November 18th, 2022. There are also sponsorship opportunities for businesses wanting to further support the young leaders of Kansas.

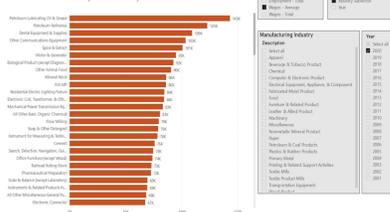
For more information about the program or to nominate a candidate, please visit <https://nextgenunder30ks.com/>.

Upcoming Partner Events

- 4/14 - Loan Denials - Kansas SBDC
- 4/28 - KEC State Competition - KSU Entrepreneurship / Network Kansas

Interactive Industry Data Tools and Services for Manufacturers

Wages - Average by Industry Subsector
Multiple Industry Subsectors



The Great Plains TMC has developed an interactive data visualization feature, which can be found under the [Industry Sector](#) tab of the membership. This feature allows Great Plains TMC members to view Wage data (both total and average wages) and Employment data for the state of Kansas, with options to drill down

by year, industry subsector, or by selected groups of years and industry subsectors. A second page of this tool allows members to chart this data in a time series.

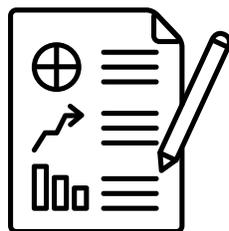
We hope that members will find this interactive tool useful, and hope to expand the scope of industry data we provide via this free service. We would welcome feedback on what types of data would help you and your business be successful.

Additionally, if you have internal data management/analysis needs related to your specific business, you should also check out the [Data Analytics](#) page in the membership for a list of services we can provide. Please send your thoughts and questions to info@greatplainsmcm.org.

Why Should You Use Databases? - Blog

Spreadsheets are the finest invention since sliced bread, especially with all the functions and backend programming that can be used to automate them. However, spreadsheets are not the best place for long-term storage of company data. Here are a few problems that companies face when trying to store data in spreadsheets.

- **Multiple Versions Circulating with Incomplete Data:** When spreadsheets are shared among multiple people at a company, they get passed around and saved on different computers in slightly different forms. So, all the versions end up being incomplete, often requiring a major project to consolidate the data back into a single "working document".
- **Tracking Change History:** With multiple spreadsheets floating around, it is difficult to keep records of changes that are made to a dataset, or to keep old versions.
- **Storing Large Amounts of Data:** Spreadsheets were not meant to store tons of data, such as daily production data, and they are not easily configured to automatically collect such data



CURIOS ABOUT SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS? Click [here](#) to read the rest of the blog. If you would like to learn more about how databases could help your business store and manage data for easy searchability and use, contact the GPTMC to set up a time for discussion at info@greatplainsmcm.org.

3i Show



The Great Plains TMC teamed up with the K-State Technology Development Institute (TDI) to have a booth at the 3i Show in Dodge City March 17th-19th. This show is a salute to "Industry, Implements and Irrigation", and allows agri-businesses to showcase their products and services from across the country.

Businesses at the show included ag equipment manufacturers and suppliers, fertilizer/chemical companies, ag entrepreneurs and more. The GPTMC team was able to connect with many companies to gain insights on industry issues, resource needs, and had several companies join the GPTMC membership! [Login](#) to the membership to check out the new members in the directory!

Website Workshop Reminders

Don't forget to sign up for the upcoming Website Workshops!

- [April 6 - Concordia](#)
- [April 28 - Salina](#)

Click the events to learn more and sign up!

